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DEFENSE MINISTER PRAISES ARMY,
URGES LIBERATION OF SOUTH KOREANS

The speech made by Ch'oe Yong-kon, Minister of Defense of the People's Republic, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the founding of the Immingun, the North Korean People's Forces, is summarized below:

The Immingun includes infantry, trench mortar units, artillery units, engineering corps, tank units, air force, and navy. They are all equipped with first-class arms. However, because of the short history of our forces, we do not have many seasoned military men. Nevertheless, our forces have mastered Soviet military science and tactics, and are favored with the combat experiences gained by the Soviet armed forces.

I am proud to say that our army has been producing fine crops of sharpshooters. For example, in the recent border battle, Comrade Pyon Ik-tu suddenly encountered two enemy battalions. Without wasting bullets, he shot and killed 28 enemy troops and an officer, and wounded three others. In the Songak-san battle, he also killed 15. In the battle of 1 June 1949, he killed an officer, three soldiers, and wounded one soldier with only five bullets from a distance of 400 meters.

In an early June battle, Comrade Pyon Ik-tu used only four bullets to kill a light-machine gunner and three other soldiers from a distance of 600 meters.

In an early August battle, Comrade Hwang Kyong-ch'ol made 90 direct hits out of 99 artillery shells he fired upon the enemy invaders, thereby annihilating the invaders. In the Unp'a-san battle in October, he destroyed 15 enemy pillboxes with 54 direct hits among the 72 artillery shells he fired. [Several other similar feats are cited.]

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The braveness of our men, which gives our army unequalled strength, has been well demonstrated. In a July 1949 battle, a bullet pierced the neck of Comrade Yi Chong-pin. In spite of the loss of much blood, he kept on fighting. He finally died most heroically by plugging the aperture of an enemy pillbox which was hindering our advance with his own body.

Comrade Kim Ch'ang-sop saved his comrades by jumping upon an enemy soldier who was just about to toss a hand grenade into our pillbox. Both he and the enemy were killed.

Wherein lies the real source of power of our army? The solid and steadfast political and thought conceptions of our soldiers are the basic foundation of our military strength. Our power lies in the democratic social system of the People's Republic. In our republic, the interest of the state is the interest of the individuals; the two are never separated.

In contrast, the officers and troops in the so-called "National Defense Army" of South Korea fight for ambiguous objectives, and consequently have no confidence in themselves. We find no instances of braveness comparable to ours in their army. Such a lack of confidence drives many puppet troops to revolt or desert from their line to join our guerrilla forces. For this reason along we can say with assurance that our military power is decidedly superior to theirs.

In spite of this, the country-selling gang of South Korea has provocatively stated "War is the only answer to the problem of the North-South split. The year 1949 is for our preparation and the year 1950 for recovery of the lost territories." Thus, the South Korean gang actually started preparations for its aggression; they effected military conscription, organized Youth Defense Corps, and engaged in other acts against us.

Today, our only choice is to challenge such an aggression. We feel keenly that the job of strengthening our military power has a tremendous significance, for it means safeguarding our freedom and democracy and liberating the suppressed people of South Korea. Let us perfect our preparations for this sacred mission. The job of strengthening our military power is the job of all the people. We ask for your active support.

The weapons, bullets, provisions, clothing, and other necessary military supplies are adequately provided for each member of the People's Army, Constabulary, and Security Force. Your job is to help the soldiers' families, and co-operate with the Fatherland Defense Aid Society under the civil mobilization order so that our men can execute their missions without reserve.

In this moment of crisis, let us band ourselves together around our leader Kim Il-song, and strive for the unification and sovereign independence of our Fatherland in defense of our freedom and democracy.

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